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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). Aftermath of U.S.-Israel Security Exports Crisis

Key stories in the media:

All media highlighted the evacuation by the IDF and police on Thursday of the residents of the Maoz Hayam Hotel at the Neve Dekalim settlement in the Gaza Strip, which has become an outpost of right-wing extremists during the past few months. The IDF declared the Strip a closed military zone on Thursday at noon, meaning that no Israelis other than residents of the Gaza settlements were allowed to enter the Strip. This morning, Israel Radio reported that the IDF will today lift the closure, with some supervision. Maariv banners: "Evacuation Has Started." Referring to the results of the poll it publishes today (see below), Yediot banners: "Leap in Support For Evacuation." Hatzofe's headline reads: "Transfer Has Begun." Ha'aretz and Yediot reported that on Thursday, an additional incidence of disobedience occurred when a soldier told his commanders that he refused to take part in the army's plan to close Gush Katif to non-residents.

Leading media quoted PM Sharon as saying Thursday at the Caesarea Conference in Jerusalem that the Gaza Strip must be renounced so that Israel can be built. He slammed Jewish extremists who are "trying to terrorize society" and "to tear it apart."

Ha'aretz reported that on Thursday, the IDF killed a total of two Hizbullah infiltrators, and that the army searched for a third one. Israel Radio reported that the UN called upon the Lebanese government to extend its control over all of its territory, to exert its monopoly on the use of force and to put an end to all attacks emanating from its territory. Lebanese Information Minister Charles Rizq was quoted as saying in an interview with Maariv that Lebanon seeks peace and that Hizbullah should be integrated into his country's political system as a party.

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio quoted Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch as saying before the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S. has "some concerns" about settlement activities on the West Bank. Leading media quoted Lt. Gen. William Ward, U.S. security coordinator in the Middle East, as saying before the committee that the strengthening of Palestinian security forces prior to Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip has had mixed success, and that their transformation from autonomous fiefdoms to a centralized body is not complete. Israel Radio quoted Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) as saying at the committee session that he supports the aid plan for the Negev and Galilee.

All media reported that IDF troops entered Nablus on Thursday after receiving information that two soldiers had been kidnapped when they lost their way and entered the city. The IDF later realized there was no basis for the reports. The media quoted Palestinian authorities as saying that they had no evidence of abduction. Ha'aretz reported that on Thursday morning, Palestinian police handed over to the IDF an Israeli citizen who had mistakenly entered Bethlehem.

Jerusalem Post reported that this week, the U.S. authorized the sale to Egypt of 25 anti-aircraft missile launchers to be deployed in two battalions. The newspaper also reported that the Pentagon has announced that it is resuming U.S. participation in joint maneuvers with the Egyptians in the Bright Star games to be held in Egypt this September.

A Yediot survey of visa procedures at various diplomatic representations in Israel found that the process at the U.S. Embassy is "awfully tough." The newspaper quoted the U.S. Embassy spokesman as saying that the Embassy is constantly investing efforts to improve the quality and ease of its services.

Ha'aretz reveals that while serving as a major general in the IDF in 1956, Yitzhak Rabin proposed transferring the Palestinians from the West Bank, according to a book published by the State Archive last week.

Ha'aretz featured the conclusion of Dr. Pamela and Ambassador Robert Pelletreau's tenure as directors of the Middle East office of the Search For Common Ground. The newspaper quoted Robert Pelletreau, who engineered official contacts between the U.S. and the PLO in 1988, as saying that President Bush has, in fact, taken the U.S. out of the game and has become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Pelletreau suggests that Bush's decision to keep his distance from the peace process has its source in domestic politics, especially on Capitol Hill.

Ha'aretz reported that President Bush on Wednesday directed the creation of a new National Security Service within the FBI. The newspaper cited the concerns of human rights organizations in the U.S. that bringing down the barrier between the FBI and the CIA could lead to violation of Americans' human rights.

A Yediot/Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted Wednesday night:
-62 percent of Israelis support the disengagement (53 percent in a previous poll); 31 percent are opposed (38 percent in a previous poll).
A Maariv/Telesaker poll conducted this week:
-54 percent of Israelis support the disengagement (55 percent two weeks ago); 34 percent are opposed (35 percent two weeks ago).

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot:
"Thursday's operation went quickly and without casualties, but the main lesson is that the army and the police have still not changed their mentality. Disengagement is here."

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "How is it possible that even those [cabinet ministers] who voted in favor of the [disengagement] plan have avoided backing Sharon up in public?"

Conservative columnist Nadav Haetzni wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "The American legislators sought to tie the administration's hands and to prevent money transfers to terror-backers. But it turns out that even in the great United States, there is a difference between the law and the administration's actions."

Block Quotes:

1. "The End of Restraint"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 1): "It took the army time to realize that the people sitting in the Maoz Hayam Hotel [in Gush Katif] had not come to show their opposition to disengagement. They had come to provoke the Palestinians, to create provocations and to push the Palestinians into responding with violence, to ignite the Gaza Strip, to involve the IDF in fighting masses of Palestinians, and to enforce their wish to halt disengagement. Only the moment that these provocations began to become overt, blatant and photographed in all their ugliness to the eyes of the entire world, did somebody decide not to wait until the end of disengagement and to get to the

point right away.... Even the tactical closure of the Gaza Strip on Thursday, to carry out the operation in the hotel, is before its time. Situation assessments had stated that closing the Gaza Strip would take place as close as possible to the time of disengagement. A month before, and if possible, even less.... We can only hope that this lesson-learning does not boil down to mutual slaps on the back. True, Thursday's operation went quickly and without casualties, but the main lesson is that the army and the police have still not changed their mentality. Disengagement is here."

II. "Silence of the Lambs as Israel Burns"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (July 1): "The country is burning and the lambs are silent.... There is a principle known as collective responsibility. Sharon's success will be [the cabinet ministers'] success. Yet no one has come out in defense of Sharon -- or in defense of the decision reached by his government, to be more precise. Even the Labor ministers, who joined the government to insure Sharon a majority on disengagement, are not standing up for him.... Nine Likud ministers voted in favor of the disengagement, and five against. How is it possible that even those who voted in favor of the plan have avoided backing Sharon up in public? Are they secretly working against him? Do they want to see him fail? The biggest surprise is Ehud Olmert, who used to act as if he were the godfather, if not the father, of the disengagement initiative. You don't hear a peep out of him any more.... What is disturbing at this acute stage is the absence of any act of leadership on Sharon's part that will show them what's what. Now is the time for him to say to his silent and subversive ministers: make up your minds. Are you with me or against me? If you're against me -- get out. And that also applies to the biggest troublemaker of them all, Netanyahu the Zigzagger. The eyes of the world are now upon us, and the clock is ticking. By the end of the year, we must reach the point where not a Jew is left in the Gaza Strip. That is the goal, and that is the time frame. Period."

III. "An American Check For Terror"

Conservative columnist Nadav Haetzni wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (July 1): "Last Friday, a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives discussed U.S. assistance to Palestinian terror. A new, worrying report was placed on the desk of the subcommittee. It was drafted by the organization Palestinian Media Watch, which is headed by Itamar Marcus. The report says that the U.S. Government funds Palestinian institutions that sponsor terror -- in contravention of U.S. law.... It was exactly in order to prevent that phenomenon that, in January, the U.S. Congress passed a special law banning the transfer of funds to sponsors of terrorism. The American legislators sought to tie the administration's hands and to prevent money transfers to terror-backers. But it turns out that even in the great United States, there is a difference between the law and the administration's actions. Of course, the report's data are known to the Washington leaders. Still, the will to create an imaginary reality in the Middle East prevails over compliance to the law.... This deceptive American move is combined with another one by the Israeli government. The creation of an imaginary reality, and the deception of the public are needed in both capitals. Whitewashing Abu Mazen is as important to Bush as it is to the Sharon family's bureau -- the hell with reality."

12. Aftermath of U.S.-Israel Security Exports Crisis:

Summary:

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Arrogance is the most prominent feature in the Rumsfeld-era Pentagon. It doesn't stop in Iraq."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The damage the current [Israeli arms sales] system has inflicted on our foreign affairs as well as our national coffers cannot be exaggerated. It also need not and must not be tolerated."

Block Quotes:

I. "Chinese Acupuncture"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (July 1): "Israel has two kinds of friends in Washington: those who support it unconditionally and are certain of its perfection, and those who love Israel in a patronizing fashion -- they know better than Israel what is good for it. Doug Feith, who is No. 3 at the U.S. Defense Department, belongs to the second category.... All of [Defense Ministry Director-General Amos] Yaron's requests to come to Washington and to confront Feith were rejected.... Accusations hurled at Israel reached the President. The crisis caused Sharon to face a dilemma: he didn't feel like talking to Bush about it. Sharon needs the President's good will regarding much more significant matters, such as the disengagement.... Perhaps this isn't just the story of the crafty Israeli who sells weapons above and under the table, but also that of the arrogant American who does not bother to prove, who behaves towards other governments like a Wild West cowboy. Arrogance is the most prominent feature in the Rumsfeld-era Pentagon. It doesn't stop in Iraq."

II. "Rethink Arms Exports"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 1): "Once [Defense Minister Shaul] Mofaz returns [from talks with U.S. officials later this month,] the government must comprehensively revise its arms exports decision-making process. The damage the current system has inflicted on our foreign affairs as well as our national coffers cannot be exaggerated. It also need not and must not be tolerated. A situation whereby the retired generals who run this part of the military-industrial complex make moves involving sensitive, long-term diplomatic implications about which they are neither equipped nor mandated to decide must be brought to an end. A new forum, comprising politicians, diplomats, economists and academics, must be set up and assigned with the task of providing our otherwise praiseworthy arms exporters the one thing they so fatefully lack: proper supervision."

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